

development of a regional strategy for nature-based tourism. The strategy will include environmental education and marketing plans for the region. State, federal, local, and philanthropic/non-profit support would continue to be needed in the future. The intent of the Partnership is to stimulate economic opportunities in the private sector related to nature-based tourism and associated activities. Also, numerous job opportunities would be created through staffing for the Partnership and the educational centers. Economic benefits should accrue in the region due to this effort.

Funding Strategy

Long-term funding for the Partnership and the educational centers will require a diverse funding strategy. In addition to the anticipated state and federal assistance, allocations from some local governments, businesses, individuals, and philanthropic foundations would be required. Federal granting programs under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) are likely sources for federal funding. Private foundations, including the Bryan Family Foundation and the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, have been supportive of planning efforts for the educational facilities. Other broad-based fund-raising efforts among citizens in the region would need to be pursued by the Partnership's Director and board.